

Appl. No. 09/996,029
Amdt. dated February 3, 2004
Reply to Office Action of September 24, 2003

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously amended): An airbag inflator diffusion system comprising:
an airbag inflator having an exhaust gas exit port; and
a sleeve for receiving the inflator and securing the inflator within the sleeve, the sleeve being expandable radially under a force of impinging exhaust gas from the exit port to form an exhaust passage between the inflator and the sleeve, the sleeve further comprising a solid section for receiving direct impingement of the exhaust gas from the exit port and to direct the exhaust gas through the exhaust passage, and a permeable section adjacent the solid section for allowing the exhaust gas to flow from the exhaust passage to an area external to the sleeve, the permeable section circumscribing a length of the inflator excluding the exit port.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3 (cancelled)

Claim 4 (previously amended) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein the solid section is further configured to circumscribe the exit port.

Claim 5 (cancelled)

Claim 6 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 4, wherein the sleeve comprises a plurality of solid sections and permeable sections and the airbag inflator comprises a plurality of exit ports.

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Claim 7 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 6, wherein each solid section is positioned next to a permeable section.

Claim 8 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 7, wherein the sleeve is substantially cylindrical.

Claim 9 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 8, wherein a first longitudinal edge of the sleeve overlaps a second longitudinal edge along a length of sleeve.

Claim 10 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 9, wherein the sleeve is metallic.

Claim 11 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein the sleeve is made from a flexible material.

Claim 12 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein the sleeve is rigid.

Claim 13 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein the permeable section comprises a plurality of holes formed in the sleeve.

Claim 14 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein the permeable section comprises a porous material configured to allow exhaust gas to pass through the sleeve.

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Claim 15 (original) An airbag inflator diffusion system, as in claim 1, wherein a cross-sectional shape of the sleeve is substantially the same as the cross-sectional shape of the inflator.

Claim 16 (currently amended) An airbag inflator diffuser comprising:
a tubular sleeve having a first longitudinal edge that overlaps a second longitudinal edge along a length of the sleeve, the sleeve ~~capable of expanding~~ expands radially to form an exhaust passage under a force of impinging exhaust gas from an exit port of an airbag inflator when installed within the sleeve;

the sleeve further comprising a solid section positioned to impede a flow of exhaust gas from the exit port and direct the flow to the exhaust passage; and

a permeable section positioned to allow exhaust gas to flow from the exit port through the exhaust passage and permeable section to an area external to the airbag inflator diffuser.

Claim 17 (original) An airbag inflator diffuser, as in claim 16, further comprising a plurality of holes disposed in the permeable section.

Claim 18 (original) An airbag inflator diffuser, as in claim 16, further comprising a plurality of solid sections and a plurality of permeable sections.

Claim 19 (original) An airbag inflator diffuser, as in claim 18, wherein the solid sections are positioned between permeable sections along a length of the sleeve.

Claim 20 (original) An airbag inflator diffuser, as in claim 18, wherein the sleeve is formed from a blank rolled to form a substantially cylindrical shape and configured such that a first edge of the blank overlaps a second edge.

Claim 21 (original) An airbag inflator diffuser, as in claim 20, wherein the blank is metal.

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Claims 22-28 (cancelled)

Claim 29 (currently amended): An airbag inflator diffusion system comprising:

an airbag inflator having an exhaust gas exit port; and

a tubular sleeve for receiving the inflator, the sleeve having a first longitudinal edge that overlaps a second longitudinal edge along a length of the sleeve, the sleeve ~~capable of expanding~~ expands radially under a force of impinging exhaust gas from the exit port to form an exhaust passage between the inflator and the sleeve.